

get a handle on these delays and, most importantly, get the money to New Yorkers faster so they can pay the rent.

By the way, many landlords, particularly small landlords, depend on this as well. If you worked hard—let's say you are a bus driver and you own a three-family house. When the tenants in your house don't pay you, you don't have any cushion and you have to pay the mortgage. So this bill will help with that as well, this proposal.

Right now, there are 6½ million Americans who are behind in their rent. According to the New York Times, over 400,000 renters in New York City alone owe a collective debt of \$2 billion.

Congress did its job by making sure that we have money in place to help these Americans avoid evictions. Now the States need to step it up to make sure that this money gets into the hands of renters as soon as possible.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KELLY). The Republican leader is recognized.

AWARDING FOUR CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDALS TO THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE AND THOSE WHO PROTECTED THE U.S. CAPITOL ON JANUARY 6, 2021

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, earlier this week, the Senate proudly and unanimously passed a resolution awarding a Congressional Gold Medal to the U.S. Capitol Police along with other law enforcement personnel who helped defend this institution on January 6.

Today, President Biden will sign this resolution into law, and the brave men and women who served that day will receive the highest honor that Congress can bestow.

With the home of our representative democracy literally under attack, the officers of the Capitol Police, their colleagues from the DC Metropolitan Police, and others made huge, huge sacrifices to keep all of us safe.

On January 6, Congress got a firsthand reminder of a reality that many American citizens face every day; that the brave men and women of law enforcement really are the thin blue line standing between peace and chaos.

I am so proud we are adding our own colleagues in blue to the list of extraordinary Americans that Congress has honored with its gold medal.

So thank you and congratulations.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Now, Mr. President, on a completely different matter, we are more than a year from the technical end of the COVID-19 recession.

There are more than 9 million job openings in the country, the most in American history by far. Three safe and effective vaccines are easily available all across our country, free of charge, for any adult who wants one. Medical contraindications are rare, and CDC data tell us that, once somebody is fully vaccinated, their risk of dying from COVID-19 absolutely plummets right down to the normal range of risk that we implicitly face on a daily basis. Vaccines may not magically eliminate the virus overnight, but the evidence tells us that vaccines can eliminate the degree to which the virus represents a unique crisis.

We may not be entirely out of the woods—the Delta uptick makes that clear—but it is time to stop governing as if we were trapped in a permanent economic meltdown. It factually is simply not the case, but the Democratic Party's far-left flank is resisting this simple fact. They were counting on this terrible but temporary pandemic to be their Trojan horse for permanent socialism. So they don't want to admit that the vaccines are transitioning COVID from a crisis into a challenge—case in point, the surreal episode that has unfolded this past week over evictions.

For a year and a half now, the government has basically told landlords they have little or no recourse if tenants stop paying the rent. This isn't just about massive corporations that some think could eat losses forever; family businesses who own one or two units have had to keep paying their bills, their taxes, and their mortgages the whole time.

Congress already sent billions of dollars to States for rental assistance. The problem is with State governments that have been pathetically slow to get the money out, but when some Socialist House Members fail to convince their own fellow Democrats to extend this nationwide socialism through legislation, they somehow prevailed on President Biden through PR stunts—PR stunts.

One day before the President's announcement, his senior adviser said the President had “double-, triple-, quadruple-checked” whether he had the legal authority to do this, and he concluded he did not. The President himself admitted that legal scholars find his position untenable, but he still caved and did it.

The far left wants to turn this terrible but temporary pandemic into a Trojan horse for permanent socialism, and the administration is letting them call the shots.

DEBT LIMIT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in just a few days our colleagues will start ramming through yet another—another—reckless taxing-and-spending spree: trillions more in inflationary spending when families just want good jobs and stable prices.

But there is something funny happening. Even as Democrats crow about how all this spending is so good and so needed, they are petrified to vote for the credit limit increase that would make it possible.

The Democrats are about to tell Republicans to go take a hike and start tteeing up trillions more dollars in borrowing and spending, of course, without a single Republican vote. Ah, but at the same time, they are extolling the virtues of their latest socialist shopping list, they are afraid to up the limit on their credit card. They want Republicans to give them political cover for the partisan debt bomb that they will go right on to detonate with zero input from us. My colleagues are so mixed up on this, it is almost comical.

The sums that we borrowed and spent through 2020—through last year, through the last administration, through the actual economic emergency—were largely covered by the previous debt suspension that just expired, but Democrats want a new debt limit increase for the new borrowing and the new spending that they willfully piled up since they took power: about \$2 trillion back in March, trillions more sometime soon.

So they want to unleash another reckless taxing-and-spending spree with zero Republican input—oh, oh—but when the bill comes, they say it is time to split the check. When the bill comes, it is time to split the check. Initiating another budget reconciliation process in a 50-50 Senate is as willfully partisan, as “go it alone” as it gets, especially in a Senate that keeps proving we can do bipartisan work.

So, look, if our colleagues want to ram through yet another reckless taxing-and-spending spree without our input, if they want all this spending and debt to be their signature legacy, they should leap at the chance to own every bit of it.

So let me make something perfectly clear: If they don't need or want our input, they won't get our help. They won't get our help with the debt limit increase that these reckless plans will require. I could not be more clear. They have the ability. They control the White House; they control the House; they control the Senate. They can raise the debt ceiling, and if it is raised, they will do it.

TRIBUTE TO NICK ROSSI

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, now, on another matter, this week, Senate Republicans are saying goodbye to some all-star staffers.

Nick Rossi, the chief of staff to our whip, Senator THUNE, has spent 15 years mastering the ins and outs of the Senate.

This former FBI agent has used his Harvard Law horsepower to steer offices, committees, and our entire conference in the right direction. Our whip